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Making the best of it

At times, it looked more like a leveraged takeover than a political convention. Clinton operatives were busy spinning off the unwanted assets of the Democratic Party -- blacks, unions, the cities and progressives -- as longtime workers of the firm, from Jesse Jackson to Gov. Casey, were told they'd have to take a cut in pay or that their services were no longer needed. Oh yes, if you took a loyalty pledge, you got a few moments on the podium and one sentence in the candidate's acceptance speech (where liberals were lumped with the homeless as among the pariahs of America), but after such cameo appearances you were expected to shut up and get out of the way so the lawyer-lobbyist kill-or-be-killed tough guys could turn the party into a lean, mean and profitable corporation.

When you cut through the yap about "covenants" and "inclusion" and so forth, what much of the Clinton campaign is really about is political power in its purest sense, remarkably undiluted by either grace or guts. There was talk of vision, but as they say in Texas it was all hat and no cattle. These weren't people out to build coalitions, only to win and make sure everyone knew they had.

At the moment it appears to be working, thanks in no small part to the semiotic sophistication of Clinton's glitzkrieg, which borrowed from television's disease-of-the-week specials to create the shameless bathos of the candidates' acceptance speeches and then immediately proceeded to evoke every male buddy tale from Huckleberry Finn to Newman & Redford by sending its stars across America together on the bus.

To a few, some of it was bizarre and tasteless. Imagine, one Democrat suggested, FDR on the podium telling the full story of his struggles with polio or Harry Truman turning off-stage and saying huskily, "I love you, Bess." But to many more -- aided by a campaign press that as early as February was 90% in Clinton's camp and by party workers desperate to end their twelve year exile -- it will be an appealing and fully credible myth.

In reality, there is no choice but to elect Clinton even if it means, as it appears to, that America will no longer have a major party ostenstibly committed to social democracy, that we will be forced to choose between the far right and the near right, between the old money troglodytes of the GOP and the new money hustlers of the Democrats, that America's second great reconstruction era is now officially over, and that dreams denied will be replaced by dreams deferred.

That the Clinton myth is not what it appears is not surprising when you see who is behind it all. The Clinton slogan is "People First." But which people? Here are just a few at the top of Clinton's list :

There is, of course, Democratic chair Ron Brown, a man whose well-burnished vacuity fits the Clinton ethic well. Ron Brown of the law firm that represented BCCI, the source of history's greatest financial scandal, a scandal which nonetheless passed unnoticed by the "party of the people." Ron Brown, the lawyer for Baby Doc Duvalier during much of the 80s. Ron Brown, the attorney for the foreign automobile manufacturers.

Then there is Micky Kantor, Clinton's campaign manager, whose law firm represents GE, Martin Marietta, United Airlines, and ARCO.

Then there is the guy from Goldman Sachs who headed the host committee and was probably the first investment banker ever to be cheered by a Democratic Party convention. Perhaps the delegates knew that he and his friends had raised almost $1.5 million for Clinton at just two fundraisers in the spring. What they probably didn't know was that Goldman Sachs also helps to arrange foreign takeovers of American businesses.

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Bucking the system since 1966

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In fact, according to a study by *In These Times,* by spring Clinton had raised over a quarter of his money from Wall Street, with the assistance of people like Roger Altman of the Blackstone Group (which helped Sony buy Columbia Pictures) and Arthur Liman, who defended both Michael Milken and Dennis Leving and who assisted Carl Icahn and Ronald Perlman in takeovers.

Then there's the Washington crowd that almost matched the Wall Street effort. People like Thomas Boggs, Ron Brown's partner and lobbyist for Frank Lorenzo, who, according to the *Village Voice,* pulls down $1.5 million a year. Robert Bruce, who represents Sony. Anne Wexler, lobbyist for the Mexican free trade agreement. And Sheldon Cohen, who represents the government of Mexico.

These are the faces that didn't appear on the split screen at the convention. They're perfectly willing to wait until Inauguration Day.

The Clinton campaign is meant to be about the middle class, but in fact it actually has a pretty dismal view of the middle class. The Clinton middle class is selfish, it is paranoic, it is racist, it hates the poor, and it won't spend a dime on the communal interest. This is not the middle class to which the moral imperatives of Harry Truman, Jack Kennedy, LBJ and Jimmy Carter successfully appealed. This is the mean, stingy and self-righteous middle class of Spiro Agnew, Ed Meese, Lee Atwater and Dan Quayle.

Of course, Clinton doesn't come right out and say this but if it were not so why does he promise to end "welfare as we know it?" Or put 100,000 more cops on the streets, even though he realizes that America already has, without results, the highest imprisoment rate of the developed world? Why does this campaign sound like Archie Bunker would have if he had gone to law school?

In the last campaign, there was one candidate who sent out coded messages. This year there are two. To be sure, Clinton is not quite so crude as Lee Atwater was, although he came close with his gratuitous remarks about Sister Souljah. His campaign spinmeisters merely cite the importance of the suburban vote and the declining significance of the urban base. The fact that most suburbs are actually urban is irrelevant, for what really is being discussed is the ethnicity of the residents -- racial appeals in designer clothes. The new covenant is apparently a restrictive covenant as well.

The hidden message of the Clinton campaign is essentially the classic Republican message: that the problems of the nation have been caused by minorities, unions, the poor and liberals. And at the convention, Clinton & Co. showed how they would put them in their place.

They did a good job of it, yet still they couldn't completely hide an undercurrent of unease. It kept cropping up, sometimes unintentionally. As when Clinton named Al Gore his running mate. Gore was widely described as embodying integrity, "family values," leadership, foreign policy experience, and some ideas to which he has clung for more than a few months at a time. Yet it was also said that he was added to the ticket for "balance," which, when you come to think of it, is about as damning a criticism of Clinton as anyone has made all year.

As this is written, Perot has just dropped out. Only a fool would predict what will happen between now and November. But if Clinton does win, it is safe to say that it will not be the mushy moderation so long espoused by the Democratic Abandonship Council that turns the trick. It may be the historical link between the economy and Democratic victories. It may be that Bush completes his self-destruction, now so well underway. It may well be that the Clinton campaign displays massive semiotic superiority. Or it may be, as Dukakis discovered too late, that Clinton finally learns that an honest populism is the best Democratic policy. Switching to such an approach, Dukakis rose ten points

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in the last two weeks of the campaign.

In any case, the takeover of the Democratic Party by political manipulators and influence peddlers of the most avaricious kind is complete and there is nothing to be done except to try to pick up the pieces. Since it appears, under the Constitution, that we must have a president, it behooves us to rummage through the toxic waste dump that our national politics has become and attempt to find -- amongst the shards, the glop and the stench -- a little hope.

Despite this campaign making me feel like a seagull that got too close to the *Exxon Valdez*, I shall not stay home this November for a number of reasons:

- I tried it once with Hubert Humphrey in 1968 and it didn't help a bit.
- Clinton's sins, and they are considerable, can be differentiated from those of Bush just as the Catholic Church differentiates between venial and mortal transgressions. Clinton's are of the dissembling, disingenuous, hustling, self-aggrandizing, vote-scrounging variety of traditional corrupt and banal American politics. Have no doubt. Clinton will con you. He already has. He says, "I will wage war on the health care bureaucracies," but his health care plan is specifically designed to protect these bureaucracies.

Bush, of course, suffers from many of Clinton's sins. He is even more manipulative; and -- although the media is too busy quoting the president on family values to remark upon it -- might well challenge Clinton in the matter of marital fidelity.

The big difference is that Clinton, unlike Bush, has his lust and ambition sufficiently under control at this point that it endangers neither the Republic nor its constitution. There is a long road between a hustle and a coup.

- Clinton is a Democrat, albeit of the Vichy variety that toadies to the CEO of Western Digital and the National Association of Manufacturers while dissin' Jesse Jackson and the labor unions. Even the Vichy Democrats, however, have a substantially better record than the GOP on domestic matters, an assertion that can easily be checked by reviewing George Bush's vetoes, not to mention his appointments to the Supreme Court. Yet another way you can compare Republicans and Democrats is in lives lost -- from hapless Iraqi civilians to the American homeless and ill-attended children. One of the key issues of this campaign is which candidate will kill the fewest people. Clinton wins hands down.
- Mae West said that when faced with a choice between two evils she always picked the one she hadn't tried before.
- Jim Farley's daddy said, "Remember, behind every Democrat no matter how bad are other Democrats." A Clinton administration will be a mixture of the good and the awful. The awful is the price we have to pay to get the good.
- There is always the possibility that Clinton -- whose presidential ambitions were apparently a prenatal condition -- will turn his attention to the good of the country once he has achieved his goal. While this should not be relied upon, Clinton is the only candidate for which the possibility exists.
- The worse Clinton does the worse the rest of the Democratic ticket will do. If you think things are bad now wait until we have a Republican Congress. If you can't stand the thought of voting for Clinton, just pretend it's Carol Mosely Braun or Barbara Boxer when you're punching the card. Remember that such folk will have a much easier time of it with Clinton than with Bush.
- You only have to vote for Clinton. You don't have to inhale him. -- *Sam Smith*

Looking behind the Bushes

Little noted or little remembered moments in the life of George Bush, his family and his pals

1933

Prescott Bush Sr., leads a raid on a Indian tomb to secure Geronimo's skull for Skull & Bones.

1937

Prescott Bush's investment firm sets up deal for the Luftwaffe so it can obtain tetraethyl lead.

1942

Three firms with which Prescott Bush is associated are seized under the Trading with the Enemy Act.

1953

George Bush and the Liedtke brothers form Zapata Petroleum. Zapata's subsidiary, Zapata Offshore, later becomes known for its close ties to the CIA.

1954

The Bush family buys out the Liedtke brothers.

1955

George Bush sets up a Mexican drilling operation, Permago, with a frontman to obscure his ownership. The frontman later is convicted of defrauding the Mexican government of $58 million.

1959

Manuel Noriega recruited as an agent by the US Defense Intelligence Agency.

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1960

Some investigators believe George Bush spent part of this year and the next in Miami on behalf of the CIA, organizing rightwing exiles for an invasion of Cuba. Is said to have worked with later Iran-Contra figure Felix Rodriguez.

1961

According to the *Realist*, CIA official Fletcher Prouty delivers three Navy ships to agents in Guatemala to be used in the Bay of Pigs invasion. Prouty claims he delivered the ships to a CIA agent named George Bush. Agent Bush named the ships the *Barbara, Houston* and *Zapata.*

Bay of Pigs invasion fails. Right-wingers blame Kennedy for failure to provide air cover. CIA loses 15 men, another 1100 are imprisoned.

George Bush invites Rep. TL. Ashley -- a fellow Skull & Boner -- down to Texas for a party in order to meet "an attractive girl." Bush writes that "she may be accompanied by an Austrian ski instructor but I think we can probably flush him at the local dance hall." Bush notes that he's had to unlist his phone because "Jane Morgan keeps calling me all the time." [From a letter in the Ashley archives uncovered by *Spy* magazine.]

Zapata annual report boasts that the company has paid no taxes since it was founded.

1963

John F. Kennedy is assassinated. Internal FBI memo reports that on November 22 "reputable businessman" George H. W. Bush reported hearsay that a certain Young Republican "has been talking of killing the president when he comes to Houston." The Young Republican was nowhere near Dallas on that date.

According to a 1988 story in *The Nation,* a memo from J. Edgar Hoover states that "Mr. George Bush of the CIA" had been briefed on November 23rd, 1963 about the reaction of anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Miami to the assassination of President Kennedy. George says it ain't him, admits he was in Texas but can't remember where.

1964

George Bush runs as a Goldwater Republican for Congress. Campaigns against the Civil Rights Act.

1966

Bush, runs as a moderate Republican, gets elected to Congress. Robert Mosbacher chairs Oil Men for Bush.

Apache leader Ned Anderson meets with the Skull & Bones lawyer and George Bush's brother Jonathan who attempt to return the skull Prescott Bush had looted in 1933. Anderson refuses the skull because he says it isn't Geronimo's.

1970

Bush loses Senate race to Lloyd Bentsen, despite $112,000 in contributions from a White House slush fund. Jim Baker is campaign chair. Bush later claims to have reported correctly all but $6000 in cash --which he denies he got. A 1992 story in the *New York Times* says the $6000 was listed in records of Nixon's "townhouse operation" which was designed in part to make GOP congressional candidates vulnerable to blackmail.

1971

Bush is named UN Ambassador by Nixon.

Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs finds enough evidence of Noriega's involvement in drug dealing to indict him, but US Attorney's office in Miami considers grabbing Noriega in Panama for trial here to be impractical. State Department also urges BNDD to back off.

1972

Bill Liedtke gathers $700,000 in anonymous contributions for the Nixon campaign, delivering the money in cash, checks and securities to the Committee to ReElect the President (the infamous CREEP) one day before such contributions become illegal. Bill says he did it as a favor to George.

1973

Bush is named GOP national chair. Brings into the party the Heritage Groups Council, an organization with a number of Nazi sympathizers.

Bush, according to Lowell Weicker, inquires as to whether records of the "townhouse operation" should be burned.

Robert Mosbacher wins an offshore drilling concession from Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Watergate tapes indicate concern by Nixon and aide HR Haldeman that the investigation into Watergate might expose the "Bay of Pigs thing." Nixon also speaks of the "Texans" and the "Cubans." and mentions "Mosbacher."

In another tape, Nixon decides following his re-election to get signed resignations from his whole government so he can centralize his power. Says Nixon to John Erlichman: "Eliminate everyone, except George Bush. Bush will do anything for our cause."

1974

Bush is named special envoy to China.

1975

DEA report notes Noreiga's involvement in drug trade.

1976

Jerry Ford names George Bush CIA director, his fourth political patronage job in a little over five years. Bush later claims this is the first time he ever worked for the CIA. At his confirmation hearings, Bush says, "I think we should tread very carefully on governments that are constitutionally elected."

Bush holds first known meeting with Noriega. Noriega starts receiving $110,000 a year from the CIA.

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Noriega found to be working for Cubans as well, but keeps his CIA gig.

Bush sets up Team B within the CIA, a group of neo-conservative outsiders and generals who proceed to double the agency's estimate of Soviet military spending.

Senate committee headed by Frank Church proposes revealing size of the country's black budget -- intelligence spending that, in contradiction to the Constitution, is kept secret even from the Hill. According to journalist Tim Weiner, Bush argues that the revelation would be a disaster and would compromise the agency beyond repair. By a one vote margin the matter is referred to the Senate. It never reaches the floor.

Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier is assassinated by Chilean secret police agents. CIA fails to inform FBI of pending plot and of assassins' arrival in US. CIA claims the hit was the work of left-wingers in search of a martyr.

Bush writes internal CIA memo asking to see cable on Jack Ruby visiting Santos Trafficante in jail. In 1992, Bush will deny any interest in the JFK assassination while CIA head.

Bush claims nuclear war is winnable.

1977

Philippine dictator Marcos buys back Robert Mosbacher's oil concession. Mosbacher claims he was swindled. Philippine officials say they never saw any expenditures by Mosbacher on the project.

1978

Bush, Mosbacher and Jim Baker become partners in an oil deal.

From a *Washington Post* article by Bob Woodward and Walter Pincus: "According to those involved in Bush's first political action committee, there were several occasions in 1978-79, when Bush was living in Houston and traveling the country in his first run for the presidency, that he set aside periods of up to 24 hours and told aides that he had to fly to Washington for a secret meeting of former CIA directors. Bush told his aides that he could not divulge his whereabouts, and that he would not be available." Former CIA chief Stansfield Turner denies such meetings took place.

1980

Bush becomes Reagan's vice presidential candidate. Runs as a rightwinger again.

Mosbacher becomes chief fundraiser for Bush's presidential campaign. Forms a millionaire's club of 250 contributors, each of whom cough up $100,000.

William Casey forms a working group to prepare for possible Carter October political surprise. In early October, an Iranian official meets with three top Reagan campaign aides. All three deny memory of the meeting in subsequent proceedings.

On October 21, Reagan hints he has a secret plan to release the hostages. This is right around the alleged date of a Paris meeting at which the so-called "October Surprise" was settled. Some allege that at this meeting it was agreed to end the arms embargo against Iran if Iran would release its hostages *after* the election. While Bush's presence at this meeting has been denied by the House committee investigating the October Surprise, Bush's whereabouts at this critical time remain in doubt. The White House, in fact, has leaked conflicting stories.

Rep. Dan Quayle goes on a Florida golfing vacation with seven other men and Paula Parkinson -- an insurance lobbyist who later posed nude for *Playboy*. Parkinson describes Quayle as a husband on the make, but says she turned him down because she was already having an affair with another congressman. Marilyn Quayle says, "anybody who knows Dan Quayle knows he would rather play golf than have sex."

The Reagan-Bush campaign receives stolen copies of Carter's briefing books.

Bush's campaign manager, James Baker, forces the dismissal of Bush aide Jennifer Fitzgerald, described in a 1982 *Time* story as having "much to say about where Bush goes, what he does and whom he sees." Bush continues to pay Fitzgerald out of his own pocket.

1981

Reagan-Bush inaugurated. Hostages released moments before. Shortly thereafter, arms shipments to Iran resume from Israel and America. In July, an Argentinean plane chartered by Israel crashes in Soviet territory. It is found to have made three deliveries of American military supplies to Iran. In a 1991 story in *Esquire*, Craig Unger quotes Alexander Haig as saying "I have a sneaking suspicion that someone in the White House winked." Says Unger: "This secret and illegal sale of military equipment continued for years afterwards."

James Baker named Reagan's chief of staff.

SEC filings for Zapata Oil for 1960-66 are found to have been "inadvertently destroyed."

Reagan authorizes CIA assistance to Contras.

1982

CIA director William Casey begins Operation Black Eagle to expand US role in Central America. Urges use of "selected Latin American and European governments, organizations and individuals" in the project.

Inslaw, a computer software company, signs a $10 million contract to install a case-tracking program in 94 US Attorney's offices. Four months later, after obtaining a copy of Inslaw's proprietary version of the program, the government cancels the contract and begins an aggressive campaign to force the company into bankruptcy. Later sources claim that the program was installed by the CIA and sold to various foreign intelligence agencies.

1983

Noriega meets again with George Bush.

Bush presents an autographed photo to a WWII Ukrainian leader under the Nazis, whose regime killed 100,000 Jews.

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KAL 007 crashes under circumstances that remain suspicious to this day.

Bush promotes Jennifer Fitzgerald from appointments secretary to executive assistant. Seven staffers resign in protest. Fitzgerald tells the *New York Post:* "Everyone keeps painting me as this old ogre. I really don't worry about it. All these bizarre things just simply aren't true."

Neil Bush forms his first oil company. He puts in $100, his partners contribute $160,000 and Neil is named president of the firm, JNB Exploration.

Jeb Bush's business partner, Alberto Duque, goes bankrupt, is eventually convicted of fraud and is sentenced to 15 years in prison.

1984

Jeb Bush lobbies the Department of Health & Human Services on behalf of Cuban--American businessman Miguel Recarey, Jr., whose medical firm later collapses. Recarey, who was close to mobster Santos Trafficante, later disappears with at least $12 million in federal funds.

George Bush takes part in meetings to plan increased "third country" aid to the Contras..

CIA mines Nicaraguan harbors.

1985

Jennifer Fitzgerald is sent to work on Capitol Hill after stories arise linking her romantically with George Bush.

Stuart Spencer's public relation firm starts receiving over $350,000 from Panama to improve Noriega's image.

CIA starts using BCCI as a conduit.

George Bush thanks Oliver North for "dedication and tireless work with the hostage thing, with Central America." Bush will later deny knowing about the Contra effort until late 1986.

Neil Bush joins the board of Silverado S&L, serves until 1988. Silverado loans his partners in JNB $132 million which they never repay. Silverado will eventually collapse at a taxpayer cost of $1 billion.

408 TOW anti-tank missiles are shipped from Israel to Iran. A day later, US hostage Benjamin Weir is released.

1986

VP Bush goes to Honduras to promote support for the Contras. Takes along baseball players Nolan Ryan and Gary Carter.

Contra figure Felix Rodriguez meets with Donald Gregg, Bush's national security advisor, to complain about Iran-Contra operatives skimming funds from the Contras.

Bush may have made several secret visits to Damascus between 1986-88 according to a 1992 report in *Time,* which said two senior GOP senators were pressing for a probe. The allegation is that Bush went to negotiate the release of hostages in Lebanon but in fact stonewalled Syria, "playing for campaign timing. Republicans want to get to the bottom of intelligence-community suspicions that the US somehow blew a chance to free Terry Anderson and his fellow captives."

Iranian arms runner Manucher Ghorbanifar proposes "diversion" of profits from Iran arms sales to Contras.

George Bush Jr. and partners receive more than $2 million of Harken Energy stock in exchange for a failing oil well operation, which had lost $400,000 in the prior six months. Bush named to Harken board and as a consultant for fees of between $50,000 and $125,000 annually.

1987

Bush's former chief of staff, Daniel Murphy, flies to Panama with South Korean influence peddler Tongsun Park on a private plane owned by arms dealer Sargis Soghnalian to meet with Noriega. Murphy later tells a Senate subcommittee that he informed Noriega that he need not resign before the 1988 election despite the Reagan administration public pressure to the contrary.

Bill Casey dies.

Lee Atwater accuses Robert Dole of spreading stories about Bush and Jennifer Fitzgerald. An agreement is worked out, as reported by Sidney Blumenthal in the *Washington Post:* "The Dole people didn't spread any rumors and promised not to do it again. And the Bush people haven't spread rumors about the Dole people spreading rumors and won't do it again."

Harken Energy project gets rescued by aid from the BCCI-connected Union Bank of Switzerland in a deal brokered by Jackson Stephens, later to show up as a key supporter of Bill Clinton.

1988

Dan Quayle is named VP candidate. Stuart Spencer is assigned to improve Dan Quayle's image, the same job he handled for Noriega and Nixon.

Quayle embarrasses campaign by such statements as "[The Holocaust] was an obscene period in our nation's history," adding that "I didn't live in this century."

Prisoner who claimed he sold marijuana to Quayle is put into solitary confinement by the head of federal prisons, aborting a planned news conference shortly before the election.

Silverado S&L goes under after receiving 126 cease & desist orders in past four years from the Topeka office of the Office of Thrift Supervision. These orders found conflict of interests, insider abuse and other violations.

Dwight Chapin, ex-Nixon dirty trickster, gets job in Bush campaign.

Rudi Slavoff becomes head of Bulgarians for Bush. In 1983, Slavoff organized an event honoring Austin App, promoter of the theory that the Holocaust was a hoax.

Slavoff joins other GOP ethnic leaders in the Coalition of American Nationalities co-chaired by Edward Derwinski. Among them is a former member of an Hungarian pro-Nazi party. After press revelations, eight of the leaders accused of anti-semitism resign from the campaign. Bush says: "Nobody's giving in... These people left of their own account."

GOP flier warns that "all the murderers, rapists and drug pushers and child molesters in

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Massachusetts vote for Michael Dukakis."

Bush establishes Team 100, which will eventually grow to 249 individuals who contribute nearly $25 million in soft money to help the GOP cause. The contributions also apparently help the contributors, various of whom get ambassadorial appointments, legislative favors, and intervention on regulatory and criminal matters.

Bush denies knowledge of Noriega's involvement in drug dealing.

The Willie Horton ad is aired. Credit for similar tactics is given to campaign guru Lee Atwater, whose PR firm had represented drug-connected Bahamian prime minister Oscar Pinding and the Philippines' Marcos. Atwater himself had represented UNITA, the CIA-backed Africa rebel group.

Fred Malek, ex-Nixon aide, resigns from the Bush campaign after it's revealed that he compiled a list of Jews in the Labor Dept. as part of a Nixon investigation of a "Jewish cabal."

A few days before the supposedly surprise arrest of five BCCI officials, some of the world's most powerful drug dealers quietly withdraw millions of dollars from the bank. Some government investigators believe the dealers were tipped off by sources within the Bush administration.

Although Felix Rodriguez, former leading cop under Batista, claims he left the CIA in 1976, *Rolling Stone* reports that he is still going to CIA headquarters monthly to receive assignments and get his bulletproof Cadillac serviced.

Bankruptcy judge George Bason Jr. concludes that the government stole Inslaw's software through "trickery, fraud and deceit."

Stock market drops 43 points on false rumor that *Washington Post* was about the publish the Bush-Fitzgerald story.

1989

Bush inaugurated. Aides tell the press that the new administration would rather "stay one step behind than be one step ahead."

Bush authorizes CIA support to Noriega's opposition, giving Noriega an excuse to annul Panama's elections.

Bush claims executive privilege to avoid testifying in the Oliver North trial, thus becoming first president to use this power to keep his acts as vice president under wraps.

Dan Quayle declares changes in Soviet Union "just a public relations extravaganza."

Bush brother Prescott flies to Shanghai after the Tiananmen Square massacre to close a deal for an $18 million resort there, despite his brother's ban on high-level Chinese contacts. Prescott says, "We aren't a bunch of carrion birds coming in to pick the carcass. But there are big opportunities in China, and America can't afford to be shut out."

Prescott Bush also visits Japan, searching for consulting contracts just ten days before his brother arrives on a presidential tour. The Japanese firm that paid Prescott a quarter-million dollar consulting fee comes under investigation for exchange law violations and links to the Japanese mob.

C. Boyden Gray, the president's top ethics official, corrects his 1985 and 1986 financial disclosure forms. He forgot to include $98,000 in income.

George Bush signs the S&L bailout bill promising that "these problems will never happen again."

The *Chicago Tribune* reports: "After 14 fishing outings, the President has failed to catch a single fish."

At White House behest, the DEA lures drug dealer to Lafayette Park to make arrest in front of presidential home for the benefit of Bush's upcoming drug speech. At first, drug dealer is dubious, asks DEA agent, "Where the fuck is the White House?"

Defense secretary nominee John Tower runs into confirmation troubles when it is revealed that he has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting fees from defense contractors. Runs into more trouble with revelations of womanizing and drinking. His nomination is rejected.

The sale of three communications satellites to China is announced. Prescott Bush is a $250,000 consultant in the deal.

GOP memo is leaked implying that House Speaker Tom Foley is a homosexual.

Pres. Bush signs a top-secret directive ordering closer ties with Iraq, which opens the way for $1 billion in new aid just a little more than a year before Bush goes to war against that country. The agricultural credit allows Saddam Hussein to use his hard currency for a massive military buildup.

A second judge concurs that the government stole Inslaw's software.

The *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* published by the US government, reports that the GNP of East Germany during the 1980s was greater than that of West Germany. The figures come from the CIA.

Bahrain officials suddenly break off offshore drilling negotiations with Amoco and decide to deal with Harken Energy, George Bush Jr.'s firm. Harken has had a series of failed ventures and no cash, so the Bass brothers are brought in to finance Harken's efforts at a cost of $50 million.

Neil Bush bails out of JNB Exploration, the firm where he became president with a $100 ante, leaving his partners to worry about its debt. Days earlier he forms Apex Energy with a personal investment of $3000. The rest of the money -- $2.7 million -- comes from an SBA program designed to help "high risk start-up companies." Like JNB, it proves to be just that. Apex will later go belly-up with no assets.

1990

Federal regulators give Bush son Neil the mildest possible penalty in the $1 billion failure of the Silverado S&L. The deal is so good that Bush drops his appeal. Among other things, Neil, as a Silverado director, voted to approve over $100 million in loans to his business partners.

George Bush Jr. sells two-thirds of his Harken Energy stock at the top of the market for $850,000, a 200% profit, but makes no report

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to the SEC until March 1991. Bush Jr. says later the SEC misplaced the report. An SEC representative responds: "nobody ever found the 'lost' filing." One week after Bush's sale, Harken reports an earnings plunge. Harken stock falls more than 60%.

Fred Malek returns to power with ambassador status to head up planning for the economic summit.

S&L industry is losing money at the rate of $3 million a minute. Bailout chief estimates total cost at $325-500 billion.

Some 200 young soccer players have their games canceled for security reasons because Bush wants to go fishing on the Potomac nearby. Says one seven-year-old player: "We had a tough soccer game and he's just going fishing. He could play somewhere else."

Bush son Jeb gets the federal government to pay off the $4 million he owed to a failed Florida thrift.

Bush brother Jonathan's east coast brokerage fined in two states for violating laws and Jonathan is barred from public trading in Massachusetts.

Bush's attorney general, Richard Thornberg, is warned about BCCI but does nothing.

Federal court of appeals throws out the Inslaw case on the grounds that it did not belong in bankruptcy court.

Bush says, "The economy is headed in the right direction."

1991

Former top aide to White House Chief of Staff John Sununu goes to work for a prominent figure in the BCCI scandal less than a month after leaving the Bush administration. Edward Rogers Jr. signs a $600,000 contract to give legal advice to Sheik Kamal Adham, an ex-Saudi intelligence officer who is being investigated for his role in BCCI's takeover of First American Bancshares.

The Miami acting US Attorney is allegedly rebuffed by the Justice Department in his efforts to indict BCCI and some of its principal officers on tax fraud charges. Justice Department later denies this occurred.

Danny Casolaro, a reporter investigating the Inslaw story, is found dead in a motel room bathtub, the day after he met a key source. The death was ruled a suicide. Perhaps he is despondent over the loss of his briefcase, which is missing from the room.

George Bush spends three nights in a Houston hotel so he can claim Texas residency. Texas has no income tax.

Neil Bush bails out of Apex Energy after collecting $320,000 in salary plus expenses. Bill Daniels, cable-TV magnate who has been lobbying against regulation of the cable industry, offers Neil a job. According to a representative, he "thought Neil deserved a second chance."

1992

New York Times reports that three of Bush's top fundraisers are being sued in connection with bank failures and another pleaded guilty to mail fraud in connection with an S&L. These men include the GOP national finance chair, vice chair and two co-chairs of the President's Dinner, which raised $9 million for Republican causes.

Former US Attorney General Elliot Richardson, representing the owners of Inslaw, tells *Mother Jones,* "I don't know any case where the government has stonewalled like this."

First of Harken Energy's wells off Bahrain comes up dry. George W. Bush takes a leave of absence from the firm to work in his father's campaign, saying "I don't want to involve this company in any kind of allegations of conflicts or whatever may arise."

Village Voice reports that President Bush has taken at least 76 partisan flights during his term, at a cost to the taxpayers of over $6 million.

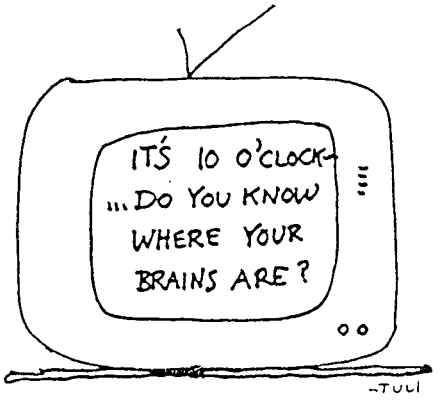
Nixon's Jew hunter Fred Malek is back as Bush's campaign manager.

Campaign sells photo opportunities with the president at a fundraiser for $92,000 each.

Washington, DC, loses $52,000 in taxes because Bush claims to be a Texas resident.

Donald H. Alexander contributes $100,000 to Team 100; shortly thereafter he's named ambassador to the Netherlands.

Bush says: "I will do what I have to do to be reelected." -- *s.s.*



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The Weather Report

Just politics

Money magazine reports that Clinton annually receives about $1.4 million in admissions tickets to the state-regulated Oaklawn racetrack to hand out to campaign contributors and others. *Money* could find not another major racing state that allows such payoffs and quotes an authority on government ethics as saying "It creates appearances of impropriety," which is the preferred euphemism for a payoff in establishment circles these days. Yet even the expert had to admit, "I'm stunned frankly at the amount. It's a staggering amount." The Clinton campaign's reaction to the story came from a flack who said the passes, which have gone to the state's governor since the 1950s, are a "great nuisance," adding that "I guess the potential is there for a conflict of interest, but we never let it be a conflict." Trust us.

The practice is not a fluke. According to Brooks Jackson of CNN, the commission that regulates Arkansas's only greyhound track meets several times a year at the track's exclusive Kennel Club, with the Southland Greyhound Park paying for the commissioners' food and booze.

I've known that the economy is in free fall. I hope I've known it. Maybe I haven't conveyed it was well as I should -- George Bush, Jan. 16

The economy is not in free fall -- Dan Quayle, Jan. 18

This isn't just kind of the normal political endorsement. I really mean it. -- George Bush endorsing Sen. Arlen Specter.

I honestly believe I would make one of the worst elected officials in the history of this country -- Ross Perot on CBS, 1969

As long as Dan Quayle wants to make moral values an issue, it may be worth taking a look at one of his spiritual advisers, such as his minister, Robert B. Thieme. Thieme preaches such things as: "The Middle East is the focal point of the angelic conflict. Two-thirds of the Jews must die to fulfill the Bible prophecies about Armageddon." The only way they can't get out of this predicament is to convert to Christianity.

(There's another advantage to the latter course. It makes you eligible for employment at Pat Robertson's hotel, Founder's Inn, where Quayle keynoted a meeting recently. The hotel only hires born-again Christians.)

Curious about all this, Paul Krassner of the *Realist,* wrote Quayle to find out whether the vice president agrees with Thieme. Back came a letter from the veep that said:

We were touched by your kind words of support and encouragement. Throughout the trying times and challenges that I have encountered, it has been the love of family and friends and my faith in God that has seen me through. Having your kind words of support have been an added blessing....

We thought one of the more perceptive comments about Perot came from Jerry Roberts of the *San Francisco Chronicle.* Noting that Bush talks of "fully funding the McKinney Act" and Clinton of "basic lifetime retraining for labor market systems," Roberts said that Perot "is the only candidate who does not speak in the language of the problem."

The Greens don't get much coverage in the American media, but they continue to grow, witness this spring's creation of the Green Republicans of Wisconsin. The group was formed at the Old White Schoolhouse in Ripon, where the GOP itself was started 148 years ago.

Gene McCarthy got nearly 60,000 votes in the California primary.

More blatant self-promotion

The *Review* has been selected as one of the winners in the 4th Annual Press Awards sponsored by the *Utne Reader.* The *Review* was chosen for its coverage of emerging issues. It was also a nominee in the category of best publication under 15,000 circulation.

Weed and seed

At we pointed out last issue, President Bush's "weed and seed" program is part of a urban pacification program with eerie echoes of Vietnam. It hasn't gotten much attention, but the plan -- which uses law enforcement funds allegedly to weed out serious criminals from a community and then seed with social programs -- has come under fire in Seattle.

The *Community Catalyst* there calls it the "Trojan Horse of the New World Order." Two letters from the Justice Department to the local US attorney revealed that weed and seed funds could not be used for social programs that had no connection with law enforcement and that there must be "direct police officer (or other criminal justice system personnel) involvement. One letter specifically stated that funds

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could not be used to help a local teen clinic or a health clinic.

The paper also raised questions about the way so-called "community policing" was being carried out, including using close cooperation with the police -- i.e. informing -- as a prerequisite for continued social service benefits.

A memo from the Bureau of Justice Assistance notes that "drug users and offenders are held accountable through the ... denial of benefits. Private citizens are encouraged to work in partnership with the criminal justice system."

Says the *Community Catalyst:*

"For many, such close coordinating between law enforcement and community presents a disturbing drift toward police state conditions, where neighbors watch and report who you associate with, whether you hang out with someone 'suspicious,' how many visitors you have, when they come and when they leave..."

The mediacracy

News has been disappearing from the front pages of the *Washington Post,* replaced in no small part by the reflections of various *Post* writers on what the unreported news means to them. This approach, which seems a probably futile and certainly boring attempt to justify the *Post's* existence in a world of television and *USA Today,* reached new heights recently when the *Post* commissioned a presidential poll and then failed to tell what the results were for nine full paragraphs, which took one deep into the jump, after a tedious trek through E.J. Dionne Jr.'s analysis.

The media watchmag *Extra!* has done an analysis of the political coverage of the *Post, New York Times* and *LA Times.* Of all election stories studied, the percentage devoted to campaign analysis ranged from 43% at the *New York Times* to 32% at the *Washington Post.* Coverage of issues rated only 11-14% in the three papers, about equal to the number of stories on "character." Meanwhile hard news of the campaign amounted to only 23% of the *Post* stories and only *13%* at the *New York Times.*

An article by Ben Bagdikian in *Mother Jones* notes that when a *Dallas Morning News* reporter wrote that federal examiners were alarmed about bad loans at a local bank, and the bank chair denied the story, both the reporter and his editor were fired. Two weeks later the bank failed, but neither of the journalists were rehired.

A database search by the *Washington Journalism Review* found more than 700 journalistic uses of the phrase "defining moment" in a recent 18-month period.

Feedback

In the last issue we mentioned an article in *Christianity and Crisis* (sent to us without the author's name) which dealt with the political entropy situation twelve years before we got around to it. Turns out Eugene McCarthy of Wooodville, Va., was both the anonymous source and the anonymous author. Meanwhile, it appears we are not completely behind the entropic curve. The campaign lead in a recent issue of the *Nation* was headed "From Here to Entropy."

Julian Holmes of Friendly, Md., says his mathematician daughter has computed that the LA rioting would have had to continue seven days a week for 14 years to equal the costs of the S&L scandal.

Responding to our request for bumper stickers for a troubled election, Keith Rutter of Washington suggests "Clinton: at least he say he cares." Incidentally, if you have any old Perot bumper stickers lying around, you can cut them in half and they will read: "Rot in '92."

Pat Linkowski of the Executive Image in Pittsburgh, PA, -- a firm that specializes in "presentation skills training" -- has sent us an article on "Power Presenting," written by EI founder Linda Blackman, that she thinks we ought to run because the skills she teaches "are essential" to our readership. The article (actually written in 1988) offers such unique advice as "Answer upfront questions like these: How much time do I have? Will there be time for a question and answer period? Who is the audience?..." She also warns that "approximately every fifteen seconds someone's mind begins to wander." Ms. Linkowski asks us to "remit your issue that contains her article along with your customary payment for such." Sorry Pat, our mind is wandering...

Drug busts

DC mayor Sharon Pratt Dixon has announced thcondoms will be made available to high school students and prison inmates and endorsed a trial programru to give clean needles to addicts. There are some 10,000 known AIDS cases in DC, with estimates running aat s high as 21,000. It is also estimated that one in every 45 city teenagers is infected. As we have reported in the past, prisons, with their high turnovers and unsafe sex, have been ideal incubators for AIDS. DC now joins several other large cities and two states in making condoms available to inmates.

A California company has come up with a non-intrusive computer test that will reveal impairment from drugs, fatigue, stress and other sources, reports the National Drug Strategy Network. The test requires the employee to keep a computer diamond centered on a screen as it veers to one side of the

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other. The diamond becomes increasingly unstable, making corrections more difficult. Employees are measured against their own normal baseline. The test is sold by Performance Factors Inc. in Alameda, CA (501-769-8300)

Pot decriminalization has become an issue in the Illinois senatorial campaign. Carol Mosely Braun's opponent called her "soft on crime" because of her support of decriminalization.

The myth of "crack babies" has come under attack by two doctors in *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The commentary accompanied new work by Dr. Ira Chasnoff, in which Chasnoff, often associated with the dire characterizations of cocaine-exposed infants, backs off his earlier stance. After comparing cocaine-exposed babies with those exposed to marijuana and alcohol and those not drug exposed, Chasnoff concludes that fetal drug exposure presents an developmental risk but adds:

The long-term effects which will be found... will not be explained by drug exposure alone. Before we can predict the developmental outcomes... we need further research into the addictive and interactive effects of multiple risk factors to which they are exposed, including in many case the global effects of poverty, multi-generational substances abuse and the impact of growing up in a drug-seeking environment.

The two commentators, Drs. Barry Zuckerman and Deborah Frank, note that media reports on prenatal cocaine exposure overlooked many other possible variables including "lack of access to prenatal or pediatric care, malnutrition, measles or lead poisoning, which jeopardize the development of many impoverished American children whether substance--exposed or not."

The chief judge of the Australian Court of Criminal Appeals has declared the prohibition approach to drugs a failure. Said Justice Michael Kirby: "Enough is enough. The supply prohibition strategy,, so costly in resources and human terms should be reevaluated. " He called for alternative approaches including the regulated supply of heroin and other drugs to addicts, and the decriminalization of possession and use of small quantities of other recreational drugs. "Otherwise honest citizens," said Kirby, "especially the young, are criminalized and driven from the social mainstream."

PNS reports that during a federal trial of a suspected drug courier in Buffalo, NY, a pair of drug agents said that they had detained 600 suspects at a local airport in 1989 but arrested only ten. In another Buffalo trial, agents testified to conducting 80 warrentless bus station stops and searches a month, producing an average of only about four arrests.

Land of the free

Pressure from Rep. Barney Frank led to the destruction of list of gay employees compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A FEMA employee had reported that he was pressured to provide such a list while awaiting security clearance for an overseas project. Although FEMA is best known for its disaster relief responsiblities, it is also the agency that concocted Orwellian plans during the Reagan administration for the establishment of martial law in this country under ill-defined circumstances.

It used to be that coverups were sort of ad hoc events, a mad scramble to provide damage control for the moment... [Now] coverup mechanisms have become an integral cog in the machinery of this administration -- Rep Henry Gonzalez

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On April 25 the Air Force carried out another secret missile launch. Secret that is to Americans; the only AF announcement was brief confirmation that the launch had accord. But two days earlier, reports *Secrecy & Government Builletin*, Tass Radio in Moscow disclosed the launch site, launch vehicle and purported mission. In English.

Death Watch, a British anti-capital punishment group, is organizing a boycott of Florida in the UK. Their campaign slogan is "Don't visit Florida, the Sunshine State that kills." Since the death penalty was reintroduced in 1976, 300 prisoners have been condemned to death in Florida and 28 have been executed.

Vermont recently became the 6th state to pass a lesbian and gay civil rights law.

Roadsigns

According to the *New York Times*, labor experts says the job market for college graduates is the worst it has been in half a century in the New York region, and not much better in the rest of the northeast, California, and Michigan.

As Gene McCarthy (alone amongst the presidential candidates) has pointed out, a shorter work week would make a lot of economic sense. Turns out it is also increasingly popular with workers. Last year, Hilton commissioned a poll that found that almost half of US workers would give up a day's pay for an extra day off each week. Asked with they would give up a day's pay for two day's off, the approval rating soars to 70%.

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Field notes

LA Relief: Funds to aid South Central LA can be sent to the South Central LA Relief Fund, c/o Adams National Bank, 2905 M NW, Washington DC 20007. The fund is being coordinated by the Center for Policy Alternatives.

The Bohemian Grove Action Network was scheduled to hold its annual protest at Bohemian Grove on July 18. Bohemian Grove is where the nation's political and corporate elite gather in a rustic setting to share trade secrets, make plans and pee on trees. It's all pretty bizarre and hard to find anything about in the mainstream press. The BG Action Network has a slide show and other documentation on the Grove. BGAN, 707-545-8426 or 707-874-2248.

Mystery aircraft: The Federation of American Scientists has prepared a report on purported sighting of high-speed, high-altitude maneuvering vehicles that may be responsible for a spate of "lights in the sky" reports. According to FAS's Steven Aftergood, the unveiling of one or more such aircraft is rumored to be imminent. The FAS study argues that secrecy in military aerospace has exceeded all reasonable justification. For a copy of the report contract FAS at 202-675-1012.

Drug Policy and the Decline of American Cities: This book by Sam Staley shows the relationship between the war on drugs and the decline of American cities. Forward by Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke. Transaction books. $29.95

Unclassified: This is a newsletter published by the Association of National Security Alumni with plenty of useful insights into the secret government. Comes out six times a year and available for a contribution of $20 or more to ANSA, c/o Verne Lyon, 921 Pleasant St., Des Moines IA 50309.

Citizens for Proportional Representation: Founded in June to promote PR in the United States. Proportional representation -- as opposed to the district-by-district winner-take- all approach favored in this country -- is a good way to increase the voice of minorities in government and end the tyranny of the American two-party system. CPR, PO Box 11166, Alexandria VA 22312.

Fully Informed Jury Amendment: The leading advocates of informing juries of their right to judge both the facts and the law is having its second annual meeting in Dallas Sept 18-20. FIJA, 406-793-5550.

Saving Cities, Saving Money: A guide to how cities can promote efficiency in the products it buys and contracts it signs, making sure newly constructed buildings meet high efficiency standards, retrofitting, better land use and transportation and mandating changes in behavior by large corporations, small businesses and citizens. $15.95 plus $3 shipping from agAcess, 603 4th St., Davis CA 95616.

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